

THE ECONOMY OF INDO-CHINA

development, but even there they have not played the chief role in the colony's major product—rice.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Rice

Rice plays such an important role in the colony's economy that it has made Indo-China a country of *monoculture*. Rice forms three-fifths of all the agriculture, four-fifths of the native diet, and 69 per cent of the export trade. For the vast native peasantry rice is the sole product, the only article for both consumption and as a medium of exchange, the condition of the country's prosperity, the keystone to Indo-China's economy. Indo-China has always been and will probably always be an essentially agricultural country, with the cultivation of its chief crop rice always in native hands. The many varieties of rice change with the soil and with the climate, and there are as many different methods of fanning. In the North and in the South rice creates two entirely different problems.

In Annam and Tonkin the population is so dense that not enough rice can be raised for local needs. The amount planted would undoubtedly suffice, were it not for an unstable climate which alternates floods with droughts. Moreover, the population in the North is growing rapidly, and with it the need for greater production which has not proportionately increased. Public works, in the form of hydraulic engineering, have not kept pace with the need. Even more important will be the results of the completion of the Transindochinois Railroad, which should enable Cochin-China to sell her surplus in the North in an emergency. Tonkin, at least in the delta, has the advantage of two

annual harvests. This is also true of certain parts of Annam, but the monsoon season along the coast of that 'Country coincides with the harvests, and makes provisioning from the sea impossible in case of famine. The districts most exposed to disaster, particularly in the north of Annam, have for centuries coincided with the areas of political discontent.

In Cochin-China, the old provinces colonized by the Annamite government 'Consume all the rice that they raise. It is only in the new under-populated provinces opened up by the French that rice can be grown for exportation. The amount of land devoted to rice-fidcis amounts to about 2,000,000 hectares in Cochin-China and to 700,000